

The very name Freneau seemed to madden Trask. He emitted a loud yelp of hate and derision and left the table. He moved toward Gloria, but changed his mind or deferred his purpose and went up the stairs, closing the hatch and fastening it above. There was nothing reassuring in his last look at Gloria.

Nell was clearing up the table when she saw that Gloria was faint with hunger or terror. She offered Gloria the remnant of the supper. Gloria was glad to get it. She ate like another pauper. She felt that she would need what strength she would acquire. Her wits were dancing as she tried to think out a means of escape. She could not fight Nell and her father and the big man, too. She could not overcome them with force, and she had no weapon but her five wits, and they had never been trained to such problems.

She was as helpless before them as she had been when she was a little fifteen-year-old filly at Palm Beach and her governess had given her a problem in algebra (a-b)(a-b)—? She had stared at that riddle as she stared at this one.

Doctor Royce had happened along then and smiled at the easy task. He could probably solve this problem, too, but he was not here. She was alone and the solution depended solely on her.

She thought and thought while Nell cleared the table. She offered to help Nell and was permitted to aid in the work. When the last dish was removed to the wash basin Gloria and Nell took opposite ends of the coarse tablecloth. When it was folded twice the two girls began to bring the two ends together, as people do who are folding tablecloths.

Nell stopped short at the proper moment; Gloria went toward her. The solution came to her in a flash. Instead of putting the two ends of the tablecloth in Nell's fingers, she suddenly whipped the cloth over her head, brought it down around her elbows and, after a furious struggle, forced Nell back into a chair and knotted the tablecloth corners under the arms. She snatched a pair of dish towels from the wall and tied Nell's feet to the legs of the chair. Nell fought like a mad woman in a straitjacket, but the knots held.

Gloria was out of breath, but she was proud as Punch over her victory. She stood up panting and exclaimed: "Well!"

So far so good. But there was still Trask to settle with, and Jed, also. She had not tablecloths enough for all three, and she doubted if she could hoodwink those giants in the same way.

Another scheme occurred to her. She had noticed Nell poking up the fire in the little stove. Now Nell was quieting down and it was safe to leave her.

She ran to the stove, lifted the lid and set the poker in the red coals. It was a grand idea and she was tremendously enthusiastic. But the poker was not. It was in no hurry whatever. They say that a watched poker never glows. Gloria heard somebody working at the hatch before the poker had attained as much blush as a hardened shiner feels on his cheek at a little mistake.

She heard Trask's footsteps. She could see his feet on the stairway. She stared at the poker and whispered: "Hurry up." The poker was in no hurry.

Trask paused to call Jed, then he began to come down the stairway. Gloria was stupefied to see how much there was of him. His face appeared last of all and it appalled her. He carried a rope in his hand.

Trask did not see Gloria at first. But he caught sight of the animated bolster in the rocking chair and it frightened him. He stared back. But a muffled shriek came from the depths. "Pa! Pa! It's me! She did it!"

Trask understood that the witch woman had performed another of her feats and he was sure that he was under the voodoo. Then he saw Gloria standing by the stove. She looked so small and so timid that he regained courage. He roared at Gloria and moved toward Nell. Gloria cried: "Stand back!"

When Trask stamped up the cabin stairs and banged the hatchway down Gloria studied the girl. She had been beautiful, and still was pretty but too sad. Just now she was too angry. Nell had been fighting against her father till this unknown woman appeared from nowhere. Now Nell was all for her father against the world.

Gloria spoke to her, questioned her about Freneau. Nell did not answer at all, only in grumbling monosyllables. Gloria tried to bribe Nell to let her escape. Gloria offered larger and larger sums till Nell would have been dazzled if she had been convinced. At last she spoke:

"Say, who do you think you are? The Dime Savings bank? And who do you think I am? I ain't on auction. If your father had all the money you're makin' up he has, do you think you could buy my father with it? No!"

Gloria liked her better for that, but she was none the less determined to escape if she could. She talked no more. But she thought harder than ever before.

Nell went on getting her father's supper at the little stove, clattering the pans and jabbing the fire with the poker angrily.

Gloria had often steamed up the Hudson on her father's yacht. This



Jed Went Over With a Crash and Gloria Sided Up the Stairs.

was her first voyage on a canal barge. The place was extremely unlike her father's yacht, but the savor of the frying pan made Gloria democratically hungry. When Trask came back, however, his cold eyes took her appetite away. But not his own. She watched him wolf his food; she felt that he was half insane, a relentless fanatic on a wild crusade.

His eyes kept rolling in her direction. He found her so mysterious that he was half afraid of her. He remembered the loneliness of that winter night by the Soldiers' and Sailors' monument. He remembered the appearance of Freneau alone and no other human being in view. His very hands remembered the death grasp they took on Freneau's throat. He smiled. That was one good deed, at least, he told himself.

But he could not imagine how this girl could have seen him. How could he guess that she had sat at her window with binoculars to her eyes and watched the whole tragedy. He began to grow superstitious. Gloria was apparently able to perform miracles. She wore the invisible cloak. Perhaps she would leave as mystically as she had come.

Finally he grew brave enough to shout out at her: "Who are you? What was Freneau to you?"

Gloria knew that anyone who blusters is likely to be weak, so she answered coldly: "Never mind who I am. The main thing is, who are you and what was Freneau to you?"



There Was a Hissing Sound. Trask Shuddered.

Trask was so astonished by her impudence that he laughed.

"Why, you little fluffy pullet, I'll tie you up and drop you in the river!"

"Oh, you will?" said Gloria. She snatched the poker from the fire. Trask laughed at it. She hit the table with it and sparks flew. She rubbed it on the wooden top of the table and smoke arose. There was a hissing sound. Trask shuddered. Gloria jabbed at him with her red-hot sword. He could feel the searing pain of it before it reached him. When it arrived where he was he was not there. Gloria was a trifle conceited over her success.

And now, what next? She saw the rope in his hand. He had brought it to tie her with. The next idea came. She gloated a trifle.

"You thought you would tie me up, did you? Well, you can just tie yourself up!"

Trask could hardly believe that anyone would be cruel enough to inflict such an insulting injury. But Gloria's arguments were pokes with the poker.

If Trask had been more intelligent and less confused, and had known how, he might have tied himself up as the cabinet tricksters do—so that he could slip out easily. But this was beyond him at the time, and Gloria was vigilant.

She made him fasten the rope around a stanchion, then knot it about one wrist, then pass it around him till he looked like a package of Gloria's own tying. The last knots she attended to herself. She set the poker on a plate within easy reach, and knotted, and knotted, and knotted. Trask gnashed his teeth with rage, but he could not budge. He yelled just once, then she seized a dish towel, whirled it into a roll and gagged him so that he could not even gnash his teeth.

Gloria heard footsteps along the deck overhead. Probably Jed was coming down. The poker was cold. There was no time for reheating it. Something must be done at once. She put out the lamp that Nell had lighted, she set at the foot of the stairs a wicker rocker, she laid it on its side, and fell back to await developments.

Jed came down the stairs in the dark. As he left the last step he put his foot in the wicker rocker as in a trap. Jed went over with a crash that shook the barge. He was yelling that he was being bitten to death by a wildcat, when Gloria sidled past him, ran up the stairs and out on deck. She closed the hatch, fastened it and voted herself three cheers.

She looked about her now and saw that she was in the middle of the Hudson river and a great distance from either shore. The view was magnificent in the gloaming, but she had had enough of it and the hateful tug was furrowing the water and dragging the barge farther and farther north.

She saw the tiller of the barge flopping idly, and it occurred to her that if she could get free from the tug she could steer the barge to shore herself. Somewhere below was her father's home. Stas and his father and mother would be waiting for her. Perhaps her own father was alarmed. It was time for her to go home. She would take her prisoners back to her father and deliver them to whatever punishment seemed right.

She had never steered a canal barge, but she imagined that it would be about the same as a motor boat in general principles. Fortunately, she had been carried so far north that the current would act as engine power.

She was delighted with the scheme. She went forward and saw the big hawser sagged in the middle and cut the water. The tug had buckled down to its work, churning up a noisy wake. She could see the backs of the crew of the tug where they sat smoking and solemn and bored to death.

They would have had a good laugh if they had seen Gloria trying to untie the knots in that hawser with her little hands. She was laughing to think how surprised they would be later when they discovered by chance that the barge had disappeared.

When a parcel came home from a shop Gloria always tried to untie it, then always went for the scissors. So now, when she saw that she could not quite unknot the hawser, she looked for the shears. She found an ax on deck and attacked the big rope.

She hit everything but the hawser, and when she hit that at last it was like hitting a huge rubber band. The

ax bounced out of her hands and just escaped falling into the river. She picked it up and chopped at the hawser where it was wound. Every third or fourth blow hit the cable and severed a few strands. And finally the rope gave and flew. The barge quivered at its release from the tension, and the tug, suddenly unhitched from its load, jumped forward and sent the crew sprawling.

Gloria ran to the tiller to steer her prize home. She was greatly disappointed when she heard the yells from the tug and saw that the pilot already



Suddenly Whipped the Cloth Over Her Head.

was making ready to recapture the barge as soon as he could take in the hawser. Also she could faintly hear the howls of her cabin and confused prisoners. If the tug men came aboard and released them, what would become of Gloria? Gloria wondered.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CROWS' ROOSTS NOT MENACE

Federal Department of Agriculture Explains How Nature Has Arranged Things Beneficially.

The latest year book of the department of agriculture gives an account of one of the most interesting bird phenomena that still persist in the thickly settled eastern and central states—in "roosts" where crows gather every night in cold weather. Although, even in the nesting season, crows are more or less gregarious, their habit of flocking is most conspicuously displayed during the winter. In September they begin to migrate toward a comparatively small area of the country—the territory from Connecticut south to Virginia and westward beyond the Mississippi river. Their roosts are usually stands of pine or other evergreens, although sometimes they pass the night in groves of deciduous trees. Roosts are often established in the near neighborhood of large cities; one at Arlington, Va., just across the Potomac river from Washington, is supposed to have contained at times as many as two hundred thousand birds. Several other equally populous roosts have been observed in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Fortunately, the crows do not feed together, but as a rule disperse by day and forage over a wide area, so that the roost is not so serious a menace to crops in its vicinity as might be supposed.—Youth's Companion.

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Gloria's Arguments Were Pokes With the Poker.